



October 1, 2015

The Honorable Governor Rauner, Senate President Cullerton, Senate Minority Leader Radogno, House Speaker Madigan, and House Minority Leader Durkin:

We write as leaders of the nine public universities in Illinois that annually educate 200,000 students and function as regional economic engines to urge you to end the fiscal 2016 budget standoff. Currently, without a state budget, the state is committed through the K-12 budget, court ordered expenditures, continuing appropriations and statutory transfers to spend a little more than \$34 billion in general funds. The public higher education community has not received a single dollar in state funding.

Requiring the public universities to operate without a budget appropriation is unsustainable. The uncertainty of not knowing when, or at what level, appropriations will be forthcoming is resulting in some students and faculty questioning whether Illinois is the best place to learn or to teach. Students and families are alarmed about the possibility that financial aid and services will not be available. In addition, we are deeply concerned about losing the reputational excellence and the important grant funds that support both students and the Illinois economy.

The impasse casts a shadow of uncertainty over the campuses. We are on the brink of serious operational damage. Mid-term exams are not far off, and so too are decisions that must be made about staffing, academic offerings and student services for the spring semester.

Although the universities we lead have different mixes of resources depending on our respective missions, we all have a crucial reliance on state appropriations to deliver affordable, high-quality education to hundreds of thousands of Illinois students. The appropriation is a fundamental tenet of the partnership between the state and public universities.

Our universities represent over 150 years of investment by the state and its people. Our missions include teaching, discovery, health care, innovation and the transformation of young lives. We achieve these goals, and more, not as cost centers, but as a multitude of regional and statewide economic engines, employing a total of 61,000 Illinois residents and taxpayers, with annual spending of \$6.9 billion. This spending generates an estimated \$28 billion in economic impact.

As leaders of Illinois public universities, we strongly reiterate a commitment we made last spring to accept our responsible share of providing solutions to Illinois' fiscal problems. We again urge you to act on a fiscal 2016 budget that provides public universities with a responsible, sustained and predictable level of support that would ensure all of our students can continue to progress academically. We look forward to meeting with you at your earliest convenience.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration given to our request.

University of Illinois
President Timothy L. Killeen

Chicago State University
President Wayne Watson

Eastern Illinois University
President David M. Glassman

Governors State University
President Elaine P. Maimon

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Northeastern Illinois University
President Sharon K. Hahs

Northern Illinois University
President Doug Baker

Southern Illinois University
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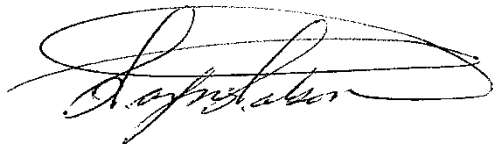
Western Illinois University
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